REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of October 2, 2008 (Office Action). As this action is timely filed within the three-month shortened statutory period, no fees are believed due. However, the Office is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account 50-0951.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.§ 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,714,977 to Fowler, *et al.* (hereinafter Fowler) in view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2002/0065885 to Buonanno, *et al.* (hereinafter Buonanno), and in further view of U.S. Patent 6,754,310 to Steinbrenner, *et al.* (hereinafter Steinbrenner). Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.§ 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fowler in view of Buonanno, and in further view of Steinbrenner and U.S. Patent 6,718,015 to Berstis, *et al.* (hereinafter Berstis)

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections, Applicants have amended Claim 1. As discussed herein, the claim amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. No new matter has been introduced by the claim amendments.

Aspects of Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a household Internet connection monitoring and troubleshooting method.

The method can include detecting a connectivity problem with a household Internet connection, which connects a household intranet to the Internet; selecting a contact point from a list of multiple contact points of a resident of the household; and

attempting to establish a communication connection with the contact point. The contact points include at least one among a mobile telephone number, a pager number, a work number, and a fax telephone number. The communication connection is different than the household Internet connection. The method can further include, when the attempt fails, selecting another contact point from the list and attempting to establish a communication connection with the other contact point until a communication connection is successfully established with one of the contact points in the list.

The method also can include conveying a problem notification to the contact point through the communication connection; providing at least one option for troubleshooting the connectivity problem; receiving a selection of one of the at least one option; and responsively performing an action relating to the Internet connection based on the received selection of option.

See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0022] to [0024]; see also Fig. 2.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

Household devices enabled for Internet communications are becoming a routine part of domestic life. For example, personal computers with Internet connections, Internet enabled video game systems, and email stations have become common household contrivances. Other Internet enabled household devices can include Web-enabled audio video equipment, video surveillance devices, sprinkler systems with remote management capabilities, automated heating and cooling systems, Internet capable appliances, emergency contact devices including health monitors, and the like. All of these devices can rely upon a household Internet connection to communicate with systems and agents disposed outside the home. See Specification, paragraph [0002].

At present, homeowners are generally not informed when their household Internet connection is experiencing problems. Such connectivity breaks can be highly significant when a household computer acts as a Web server for a home business and when critical

household functions, such as security, rely on a constant Internet connection. Even when no critical functions are performed by a household information system, a break in service can often be inconvenient to a homeowner. The problems with a household intranet loosing Internet connectivity can be exacerbated when homeowners are vacant from their home for extended periods, such as a vacation, and the homeowners rely on a household Internet connection to remotely manage the home itself or the homeowners business, personal, and financial affairs. Consequently, a method for monitoring a household Internet connection and performing remote troubleshooting tasks is needed. See Specification, paragraph [0003].

The present invention provides a method for managing a household Internet connection. More specifically, a household Internet connection can be remotely monitored by a networked application. Whenever a problem is detected with the Internet connection, a problem notification can be conveyed to a telephony device. For example, a telephone connection can be established with a homeowner and a speech message can inform the homeowner of the problem. Further, after the telephone connection has been established, the homeowner can be prompted to select one or more troubleshooting options. These selections can be received by the networked application and one or more troubleshooting actions can be responsively performed. See Specification, paragraph [0004].

One aspect of the present invention can include a method for monitoring and troubleshooting an Internet connection. The method can include the step of detecting a connectivity problem with a household Internet connection. A contact point can be determined. A communication connection that is different from the household Internet connection can be established with the contact point. For example, a voice connection can be established with the contact point. A problem notification can be conveyed to the contact point through the established communication connection. In one embodiment, the problem notification can include a speech message. In another embodiment, a

personalized problem report can be generated responsive to the detection of the Internet connection problem. The problem report can be text-to-speech converted and conveyed to the contact point as a speech message. Alternatively, the speech message can be a recorded speech message. Further, at least one option for troubleshooting the problem can be provided along with the problem notification. A selection of one of the provided options can be received and an action relating to the Internet connection can be responsively performed. In one embodiment, the received selection can include a Dual Tone Multiple Frequency (DTMF) input. In another embodiment, the received selection can include a speech input. In a particular embodiment, the method can convey a description of an Internet connectivity problem to an alternative contact point if the initial contact point is unavailable. Specifically, an initial problem contact point can be determined. An attempt to establish a communication connection with the initial problem contact point can be made. When the connection attempt fails, a second contact point can be determined and an attempt can be made to establish a communication with this second contact point. Additional communication attempts can be made until either no further contacts points for reporting problems exist or until a communication connection can be established with a contact point. See Specification, paragraphs [0005]-[0008].

As already discussed in the previous response, Fowler discloses that if an Internet connection, or main power, is lost, a net bot 40 can dial out via telephone connection 42 to inform a system administrator of the loss of power or loss of the Internet connection (see col. 8, lines 20-29). However, Fowler does not disclose trouble shooting the connectivity problem in order to help the home owner to diagnose and resolve the problem. More specifically, Fowler does not disclose "providing at least one option for troubleshooting the connectivity problem; receiving a selection of one of the at least one option; and responsively performing an action relating to the Internet connection based on the received selection of option," as recited in amended Claim 1 of the instant application. Fowler further does not disclose "selecting a contact point from a list of

multiple contact points of an owner of the household; attempting to establish a communication connection with the contact point; and if the attempt fails, selecting another contact point from the list and attempting to establish a communication connection with the other contact point until a communication connection is successfully established with one of the contact points in the list," as recited in amended Claim 1 of the instant application. In Fowler, if the telephone connection 42 fails, no attempt would be made to establish an alternative telephone connection. In contrast, in the present invention, a list of multiple contact numbers (such as a mobile telephone number, a pager number, a work number, a fax number, and the like) of the homeowner can be recorded and utilized to establish a telephone connection (see paragraph [0022]). As a result, in the present invention, the homeowner would be more certainly informed with the Internet connectivity problem.

It was stated in the Office Action that Fowler does not teach if the attempt fails, selecting another contact point from the list and attempting to establish a communication connection with the other contact point until a communication connection is successfully established with one of the contact points in the list. However, it was asserted in the Office Action that Buonanno teaches this limitation.

Buonanno discloses a method for automatically handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction in which E-commerce internet gateways through which the business-to-business transaction passes are monitored for exceptions. When an exception is detected, an intelligent contact manager automatically determines and then locates the representative(s) authorized to resolve this exception. A unified communication system is then utilized to automatically contact and notify the authorized representative(s) of the exception. A web collaboration system is then utilized to automatically establish a collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction so that the exception can be readily resolved. See the Abstract. Buonanno discloses in paragraph [0049] that a hierarchical list of individuals who have been designated as being

qualified to make decisions are stored in a list format. If the first listed individual cannot be immediately reached, then the exception handling system tries to reach the next person on that list. The exception handling system sequentially tries each of the listed personnel until someone is reached who can address the exception.

However, it is noted that the alternate personnel list of Buonanno is not a list of multiple contact points in the sense of the present invention. As already discussed above, in the present invention, the contact points refer to a plurality of contact numbers (such as a mobile telephone number, a pager number, a work number, a fax telephone number, etc.) that can be used to reach the household owner in order to more certainly inform the household owner of the Internet connectivity problem. In contrast, in Buonanno the alternate personnel list refers to a list of authorized representatives who can handle the exceptions, not different contact numbers to contact the household owner. Therefore, in Buonanno even if an authorized representative may be located in order to resolve the exception, the owner may not be notified of the problem and thus cannot select any options for troubleshooting.

It was stated in the Office Action that Fowler in view of Buonanno does not teach providing at least one option for troubleshooting the connectivity problem; receiving a selection of one of the at least one option; and responsively performing an action relating to the Internet connection based on the received selection of option. However, it was asserted in the Office Action that Steinbrenner teaches these limitations.

Steinbrenner discloses an apparatus for providing diagnostic information to at least one telephone including a telephony interface device operatively coupled to at least one telephone through a telephone line. The telephone interface device is operatively coupled to a network. The telephony interface device transmits diagnostic information to the at least one telephone. The diagnostic information may include, for example, diagnostic information concerning the network, the telephony interface device itself, and the telephone line. The Abstract.

However, Steinbrenner does not disclose providing at least one option for troubleshooting the connectivity problem for the household owner to select and responsively performing an action based on the selected option. It is noted that in Steinbrenner the telephony interface device transmits diagnostic information to the at least one telephone, but does not receive any selection of options from the at least one telephone.

Therefore, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, discloses "selecting a contact point from a list of multiple contact points of an owner of the household; attempting to establish a communication connection with the contact point; and if the attempt fails, selecting another contact point from the list and attempting to establish a communication connection with the other contact point until a communication connection is successfully established with one of the contact points in the list," and "providing at least one option for troubleshooting the connectivity problem; receiving a selection of one of the at least one option; and responsively performing an action relating to the Internet connection based on the received selection of option," as recited in Claim 1 of the instant application.

It was asserted on page 10 of the Office Action that one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. However, it is noted that when certain limitations are not disclosed by any of the cited references, it is reasonable to conclude that these limitations are also not disclosed by a combination of the cited references.

Accordingly, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claim 1, as amended. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 defines over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims depends from Claim 1 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance. Allowance of the application, accordingly, is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: <u>November 13, 2008</u>

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